

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4

ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER

61 FORSYTH STREET

ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

**SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Dr. Mark Kane Goldstein  
Gainesville, Florida

**Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)**

Dear Dr. Goldstein:

Thank you for your July 31, 2020, correspondence to Mr. Lawrence Starfield, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Your letter was written on behalf of your constituents and fellow residents of Gainesville, Florida. The Gainesville community is concerned about the reports of an unexplained mass atmospheric release that occurred in May 2020. Your letter was forwarded to the EPA Region 4 office in Atlanta, Georgia, for response.

As stated in the press releases you identified in your correspondence, the atmospheric release was reported as methane and was identified using newly developed satellite imaging technology. The imagery identified the location of the release as just to the northeast of Gainesville, Florida. In response to the same reports, EPA began to investigate the source and the reason for the release. Based on our review and discussions with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, EPA determined that the release was from a natural gas compressor station located in Brooker (Bradford County), Florida. Natural gas is equated with methane since it is the primary ingredient. The Brooker natural gas compressor station is owned by the Florida Gas Transmission Company, LLC (FGT), and operated by Energy Transfer Partners. On August 4, 2020, EPA contacted Ms. Janice Taylor, the Senior Environmental Engineer at Energy Transfer Partners. Ms. Taylor stated that an onsite operator at the station detected a natural gas leak in the engine compressor room but could not determine the location of the leak, so he performed an emergency shut down (ESD) of the compressor station facility to shut it off from the natural gas pipeline. For the ESD, the operator had to vent the gas out of the compressor station for safety concerns in its effort to find and fix the gas leak. Although this was a large release, especially by the imagery estimates, there are no reporting requirements for emergency methane releases from compressor stations under the Clean Air Act. However, gas transmission operations are also regulated by the Department of Transportation and the Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, which may have additional requirements for the reporting of natural gas releases..

I hope this information clarifies what occurred at the time of the release. If you have questions or need additional information from the EPA please contact ?????

Sincerely,

Mary S. Walker  
Regional Administrator

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